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Approved For Release 2002/01/09 : CIA-RDP79B01709A002000050026-8

15 August 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

SUBJECT: Recommendations (6)(a) and (6)(b) of the  
11 July 1966 Report of the NSAM 156 Committee

The attached draft report is sent to you for COMOR consideration  
at its meeting at 1430, Tuesday, 16 August.

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Executive Secretary  
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

Attachment:  
Subject Paper

Copies 2, 3	State TCO	
4	DIA	25X1A
5, 6, 7, 8	DIA TCO	
9, 10	OACSI TCO	
11, 12	ONI TCO	
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13 August 1966

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: Recommendations (6)(a) and (6)(b) of the  
11 July 1966 Report of the NSAM 156 Committee

1. COMOR, meeting as an ad hoc group for the purpose of studying recommendations (6)(a) and (6)(b) of the NSAM 156 Committee's report, has recognized that the intelligence community is facing a rapidly evolving situation in which it must continue to conduct the necessary reconnaissance in support of priority national intelligence requirements. This new situation is created in part by the following:

a. The successful execution over a period of approximately six years of a satellite reconnaissance program that has resulted in repetitive coverage of the entire Sino-Soviet bloc and in at least one-time coverage of over ten and a half million square miles of the earth's surface outside of the Sino-Soviet bloc. The impact of a program of this size is felt far beyond the confines of the intelligence community.

b. The implementation of a large-scale attack on the problem of establishing a highly accurate world-wide geodetic net which has resulted in coverage of most

of the earth's surface by ARGON photography and other applicable photography taken by the index camera systems of reconnaissance vehicles.

c. The successful acquisition of spectacular photography of large portions of the earth's surface by the NASA GEMINI program operating on a completely unclassified basis.

d. Publication of other unclassified photography of the earth, moon, and Mars as a result of unclassified programs conducted by the United States and the Soviet Union.

e. A considerable increase in interest on the part of other Government departments and agencies, and on the part of the United States scientific community, in the contributions that can be made to scientific and technical problems by the use of earth sensing devices carried in satellite platforms. This interest has led to and has been encouraged by unclassified discussion by NASA of some of the applications that might be considered in a NASA-operated program.

f. The growing awareness that the Soviets are conducting a successful satellite reconnaissance program.

g. The publication of numerous articles in scientific and technical journals, and in the public press, describing or

purporting to describe various aspects of the United States satellite reconnaissance program.

2. Against this background the intelligence community has operated a security system which appears to have been successful in preventing the Soviet Union from adequately assessing the successes achieved by the United States reconnaissance program. The intelligence community has also developed an elaborate set of procedures which has made it possible to use the information obtained by satellite reconnaissance for a wide range of purposes without undue security risk. In view of our success in achieving widespread use of our reconnaissance products while at the same time maintaining essential security, we are reluctant to recommend steps that would increase the security risk to our national reconnaissance program without having a very clear idea of the benefits to be obtained by such an increased risk.

3. Both the State Department representatives and the NASA representatives consulted by COMOR have stated that they would derive considerable benefit in the conduct of their business if they could discuss the fact of reconnaissance at SECRET or TOP SECRET level. It is clear, however, that all of NASA managerial problems in this regard could not be met unless the fact of reconnaissance could be discussed on an unclassified basis. State Department representatives also point out that there is a risk to both the U.S. political position and to the security of the

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U.S. reconnaissance program as a result of inadvertent error on the part of personnel who are not aware of the fact of our reconnaissance program. The Department's representatives feel that if the necessary U.S. officials could be informed of the fact of reconnaissance on a SECRET or TOP SECRET basis, they would be prevented from making these inadvertent mistakes. The State Department's position is supported to some extent by the practice of TALENT Security Officers who warn uncleared intelligence personnel who may have engaged in dangerous speculation concerning the U.S. program. The warning amounts to tacit confirmation of the fact of the existence of a U.S. reconnaissance program.

4. At the present time the Department of State (less ACDA and AID) has a total of <sup>173</sup>~~180~~ personnel who are cleared for [REDACTED] or TALENT-KEYHOLE information and thus have some knowledge of the U.S. satellite reconnaissance program. NASA has a total of <sup>124</sup>~~139~~ cleared for these same categories. Since the admission of the fact of U.S. reconnaissance at the SECRET or TOP SECRET level is an action that cannot be reversed, we believe that it would be advisable for the State Department and NASA to see if the internal managerial problems causing them to favor the release of this information could not be handled instead by granting an increased number of T-KH clearances to key personnel in their departments. If after an adequate practical test this approach does not solve the problem,

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we believe that the intelligence community should consider authorizing TALENT Control Officers to brief selected personnel at the TOP SECRET level concerning the fact of U.S. reconnaissance. A briefing statement which might be considered for use at that time is attached as Tab A. Downgrading to SECRET or declassification were also considered but rejected.

5. Recommendation (6)(b) concerns the use of T-KH photography by NASA and asks that the problem be examined in terms of the selective removal of appropriate photography from codeword control or alternatively clearance of an increased number of NASA personnel in order that they may use the photography under existing codeword controls. In our examination of this problem we have concluded that it is too early to decide the optimum manner for NASA to exploit KH photography. We have concluded instead that the problem should be approached on a step-by-step basis and that the nature of the final step should be determined at a later date on the basis of experience acquired in the completion of the intervening steps. We can foresee at least the following at this time:

a. Clearance of a panel of personnel, selected by NASA, representing all of the various disciplines of interest to NASA. This panel to be thoroughly briefed in the material now under codeword control and on the various exploitation efforts currently being employed by cleared personnel.

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b. If after Step No. 1, NASA and the intelligence community conclude it to be desirable, Step No. 2 would be the establishment of a TALENT-KEYHOLE center at NASA headquarters and possibly at the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center at Houston. This would permit NASA to receive its own copy of reconnaissance materials collected within the KEYHOLE system and would enable them to request the clearance of additional numbers of personnel to study the products and to become thoroughly familiar with both the products and exploitation procedures under codeword control to determine if further exploitation by NASA is desirable or feasible.

c. Step No. 3, the exact nature of which cannot be determined at this time, would be developed on the basis of experience required under Steps 1 and 2 above and might include the development of procedures for the sanitization , decontrol, downgrading, or declassification of certain types of KEYHOLE material. The actual sanitization or downgrading to be accomplished by NASA within the TALENT-KEYHOLE centers established under Step No. 2 above as approved by the DCI.

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6. Recommendation. It is recommended that:

a. To meet the recommendation in NSAM 156, 18 (6)(a), the Department of State and NASA select an increased number of key personnel for clearance in the TALENT-KEYHOLE System to see if the risk of uninformed discussion can be controlled by this means.

b. COMOR review the situation at the end of six months to determine whether the problem has been solved or whether there should be a briefing of additional persons at the TOP SECRET level.

c. To meet the recommendation in NSAM 156, 18 (6)(b), NASA be invited to select a panel representing those scientific and technical disciplines of interest to NASA to be cleared for access to TALENT-KEYHOLE information in order that they may study current TALENT-KEYHOLE materials at NPIC and exploitation procedures used by NPIC, the Mapping, Charting, and Geodesy community, etc., and make recommendations to NASA concerning the desirability of more substantive NASA participation in the TALENT-KEYHOLE program.

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Chairman  
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

Attachment:  
Tab A

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Tab A

Text of briefing statement to be considered for use  
at the TOP SECRET classification.

a. The United States is conducting a  
program of overhead reconnaissance which the President  
has ordered be protected on a covert basis.

b. The information being collected from this  
program is essential to national security and the United  
States Intelligence Board (USIB) is charged with the  
responsibility for insuring that there is no revelation  
of this capability sufficient to invite interdiction by the  
USSR.

c. At this time it is the opinion of the USIB  
that, at a minimum, the quality of the product and the  
quantity of the information that has been and can be  
collected be given maximum protection.

d. Having recognized that there is a broad  
need for the information derived from reconnaissance,  
procedures which have been established to make it  
possible to use this information in a variety of manuals,  
maps, charts, and similar material without revealing its  
true source. This material is by and large classified

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Tab A

SECRET and CONFIDENTIAL but is not permitted to be made available to other nations or individuals outside of the United States Government except by specific authority.

e. Your are being acquainted with the fact of satellite reconnaissance so that you may appreciate the risks to national security connected with speculation about the program and to urge that you identify to us any need that your organization may have for the results of reconnaissance in order that every reasonable effort may be made to sanitize the product and release to you information at a classification where it may be most useful.

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